

2. Ziba. This slave of Saul seems to have become a freeman at his master's death. He was now prosperous, with fifteen sons and twenty slaves. He had cared for Mephibosheth in his need, and therefore, knowing the facts and having some influence, he thought he might venture to place them before the king.

3. House of Saul. The name recalled bitter wrongs, but for his friend's sake David was willing to forget his own sufferings. **The kindness of God** means kindness or mercy such as God shows to men—large and free and forgiving. He spares those he has advantage against, and so must we. **Jonathan hath yet a son.** He had been saved from the Philistines when Jonathan was slain on Mount Gilboa. He was kept in obscurity afterward lest David should regard him as a rival. **Lame on his feet.** The nurse in her haste let him fall when she fled from Jezreel, on hearing of the death of Saul and Jonathan. He was then five years old. Fifteen years passed away before he was brought to David's notice. (2) *The fatherless are under God's faithful care.*

4. Machir. This was a rich man, probably of the tribe of Manasseh. Josephus calls him "the principal man of Gilead." He afterward showed kindness to David when he fled from Absalom (2 Sam. 17. 27). **Lo-debar.** A town east of the Jordan not far from Mahanaim, possibly the same as the *Debir* of Josh. 13. 26. In this neighborhood Ishbosheth held his court for the seven years David reigned at Hebron. Its location remains unknown.

5. Sent and fetched. David did not merely dispatch a royal command, but supplied the means of travel, as Joseph did when he brought Jacob down to Egypt.

6. Fell on his face. Probably fearing that he had been suspected as an aspirant to the throne of his grandfather Saul, and had been brought into the king's presence to receive sentence of death. The picture of David's royal power and glory in contrast with the poor crippled son of Jonathan, the last scion of Saul's fallen house, comes out in greater splendor the deeper the latter humbled himself before the former. His crippled condition made obedience more difficult and noticeable. (3) *What we dread as an ill often turns out to be a decided good.*

7. David said unto him, Fear not. The visible terror he manifested would imply that the messenger had not made known to him the king's purpose. Did David recognize in his features any resemblance to the friend he loved so well? **The land of Saul.** This family estate which was at Gibeath had fallen to David in right of his wife (Num. 27. 8), or been forfeited to the crown by Ishbosheth's rebellion (2 Sam. 12. 8). **At my table.** Be a royal courtier, and have the privileges of a member of the royal family. This is a recognized mark of honor in the East.

8. He bowed himself. Whether as the result

of misfortunes or through defect in the make-up of his character he lacked strength and show of manliness. **A dead dog.** Even a live dog is in the East regarded as an object of extreme contempt. "A dead dog" expresses the deepest depth of degradation, as joining the loathsomeness of a corpse to the vileness of a dog.

9. I have given. In most oriental kingdoms the monarch is regarded as supreme owner of all the property of his subjects, and takes and bestows estates at will; but in Israel not even the king could take an inheritance out of a family line. **Thy master's son.** Mephibosheth, Saul's grandson; here named as his son. **All that pertained.** The original estate must have been large, and was no doubt increased during Saul's reign.

10. Shalt till the land. Suggesting that Ziba was already in occupation of it. He was now to be steward, and to receive half the produce in remuneration for his labor. **May have food.** Though Mephibosheth himself was to be a guest at the royal table, he required the revenue of this estate for the support of his family and household. **Always at my table.** David's plan provided for one unfitted for active life, honored his friend's son, and gave as little chance as possible to stir up rebellion. **Twenty servants.** All of whom would now become the servants of Mephibosheth. (4) *The change of fortune experienced by Mephibosheth was but slight when compared with that of a poor sinner who is suddenly made an heir of God.*

11. Then said Ziba. Ziba submitted to the royal command, though doubtless with inward unwillingness at being remanded from the position of a proprietor back to that of a servant. Eighteen years later, during Absalom's rebellion, Ziba betrayed his master and (apparently falsely) accused him of treachery to David. The king believed him, took away Mephibosheth's property, and gave it to Ziba. But later when he had Mephibosheth's side of the story he restored to him one half of what had been taken. **As for Mephibosheth.** Scholars say this clause should read, "So Mephibosheth did eat at David's table."

12. A young son. Through whom the house of Saul was perpetuated down to the time of the captivity (1 Chron. 8. 34).

13. Dwelt in Jerusalem. He seems to have remained loyal to David through all the temptations of Absalom's rebellion; and, if so, was greatly belied by his servant, who with oriental cunning managed to rob him of half his estate. **And was lame.** See how this affected his future career (2 Sam. 16. 1-4; 19. 24-30). David's kindness did not go unrequited. For when he fled from Absalom and had reached Mahanaim, Machir of Lo-debar, the friend of Mephibosheth, provided him with beds and utensils and food and luxuries, because his people were hungry and thirsty and weary in the wilderness (2 Sam. 17. 27-29).